ABOUT A PROPOSAL

"It's jolly hard lines," Bailey junior said, flinging himself down in Jack's armchair. "A fellow isn't allowed to see Baby Jones alone for five minutes."

"Why do you want to see her alone?" I said, for the fifth Jones girl, in my mind, was still a child. Perhaps this was due to the fact that she is called "Baby," but Jack says it's because she's not allowed to have her seventeenth birthday until the two elder girls are "off." Mamma Jones may be right. More than four girls out at one time is a great responsibility.

Bailey junior, who had retained the suffix "junior" ever since he went to school with his eldest brother, looked at me in surprise.

"Why do I want to see her alone?" he replied. "Because I want to propose, of course. A fellow can't propose with an audience."

"You propose!" I echoed. "Propose to Baby Jones!"

"And, pray, why shouldn't I?" he asked. "Anything the matter with me?" He pulled down his coat and stuck out his brown riding boots on my new hearth rug. Bailey junior prided himself on his bootmaker. "I can afford to keep a wife. Jack's married."

"Oh, but Jack's quite different!" I said. "Any one can see in a moment that Jack's different. Besides, you'll never get the chance," I continued, remembering Mamma Jones' theory.

"Why the deuce not?"

"Because the four others have to go off first, and they must go in proper order. If the county knows that Baby's old enough to marry, that would make the others just too old, don't you see? It's a point of honor with Baby to remain under 17 until the eldest girl's off."

"Phew!" said Bailey junior. "Now I see. That's why she's so closely guarded and why the eldest girl is always thrown in my way. But I won't have her, I tell you. No Mamma Jones in the world will make me marry the eldest. None of your serving for Rachel business for me."

"That's right," I said. "But you'll have to wait for Baby until some other fellow does want the others."

"Oh, Lord!" he exclaimed, in a tone of voice which was scarcely complimentary to the eldest Miss Jones. "And I sail for India this day week."

"I'm awfully sorry," I said, "but that's the principle and code of honor in the Jones family. You can't pick out the best and leave Mamma Jones saddled for life with the plain ones."

Bailey junior was silent, and I tried my best to think of some plan to help him out of his difficulty. It was of no use to suggest asking Baby Jones to spend the day with me and letting Bailey junior meet her here, for the Jones girls never went about singly. They hadn't enough friends to go all around, so that if you asked one to tea two always came. They were such a devoted family.

In fact, everything that I could think of to help this despairing soul along in his lovemaking had some drawback that made the scheme impossible. There was absolutely no way it could be worked to get just those two together without bringing in one of the other sisters.

"Dear little girl," he said, "sacrificed to her elder sisters! She'll be 30 before she gets her hair up at that rate. I wonder what her age really is?"

"She's probably got mixed herself," I said. "But isn't it up yet? It will be getting quite worn out."

"It's in a sort of maidenly plait," Bailey junior said reflectively; "awfully becoming, don't you know, but"—

"But it's time she wore quite long dresses and put it right up, isn't it? A big girl, old enough to be married, in short skirts! Jack thinks it horrid."

"I think they're lovely," Bailey junior answered; "so arched and slender. Just think of the eldest girl's."

"Oh, no one does," I said. "She was put into long skirts before she left the nursery, and she was never allowed to play lawn tennis."

Bailey junior's furlough was up, and he went back to India without having proposed to Baby Jones. I met her six weeks later, and she told me she had had a letter from him asking her to marry him. She seemed much astonished that he should want to marry her and not her eldest sister. The Joneses are not an imaginative family, and such an unconventional proceeding had not suggested itself to the youngest of the family.

"Poor old Bailey!" I said. "He sat for an hour and a half talking to Bella"—that is the eldest girl's name—"the day he went to say goodby, hoping that you would come in. He was determined to propose to you before he sailed."

Baby Jones opened her big eyes wide. "Did he really? But he ought to have known that mamma said he was to marry Bella. I was sent out to do some shopping, and the others staid in their rooms and said they were out. I wonder why he didn't propose to Bella?"

"Because he was in love with you," I said. "Don't you like him, Baby?"

"Oh, yes," she said slowly. "He's nicely sunburned, and"—with a little sigh—"I do like his boots. But it's Bella's turn first."

She took Bailey junior's letter and opened it.

"I must ask mamma," she said, "for the poor fellow seems quite anxious, and he's in such a hurry. He wants me to wire back 'Yes' or 'No.' He needn't be so impatient when it's only me he wants."

"Baby," I said coaxingly, "don't ask your mother until you have sent the wire. Mothers don't always understand these things."

Then I turned and left her reading the letter slowly to herself.

"Bella will be awfully cross," I heard her murmur. "Perhaps he has an elder brother who wouldn't mind marrying Bella."

By the same post next evening I received two letters. The one was from Bailey junior, asking me to plead his cause with Baby Jones. It was an ardent, romantic letter, showing a vast imagination and a limited understanding of the character of his future wife. And the other was from Baby Jones. It was not so romantic, but Jack says it was full of common sense and characteristic of the Jones family. It ran thus: "Wired back 'Yes.' But it cost me 30 shillings!"—Westminster Budget.

PINKED THE TEN SPOT.

A Trick at Cards That Puzzled Those Who Witnessed It.

"I saw a man do a trick with cards once," said Godfrey Ashton of Atlanta, "which, although he assured me was wholly a trick and that there was no second sight or mind reading connected with it, has always rested in an unexplained condition in my mind.

"There were four of us at supper, and the man in question sent for a pack of cards, and, handing them to the man next him, told him to select a card in his mind; not to take it from the pack, but to tell the other two men what card it was. He was then to shuffle the pack and pass it to the other two men, who were each to thoroughly shuffle it. The last man was then to place it on the floor.

"In the meantime a large napkin had been tightly bound over the magician's eyes and his dress coat hung over his face with the tails tied under his chin, so that his head was to all intents and purposes in a bag. He, by his direction, was led to the pack of cards and his hand placed upon it. He then proceeded to scatter the cards about until they covered a rough circle of three or four feet in diameter. He called for a knife, and, bringing it sharply down, drove it through and affixed one of the scattered cards. Removing his headgear, he asked what card my friend had chosen. The answer being the ten of diamonds, he turned the knife toward us, and there, sure enough, was the ten of diamonds transfixed upon the point.

"He swore it was a trick, but for the life of me I cannot see how it was done. None of us was in collusion with him. I am sure the cards were not a fake pack, and I am equally certain that he was so blindfolded that it was wholly impossible for him to see. Yet he accomplished it exactly as I tell you."—New York Tribune.

HELPED DEWEY OUT.

How a Russian Baroness Prompted Him to a Compliment.

Dewey once attended a wedding breakfast at which the affable Baroness de Struve, wife of the Russian minister at that time, was present. Dewey had met this famous woman several times before. The facial plainness of the baroness was quite beyond belief, but she was one of the most brilliant, lovable and kindly women ever elected to guide the social affairs of the diplomatic corps in Washington. A lady who overheard it tells of an amusing passage which the baroness and Dewey, who, if memory serves, was then a commander, had at this particular wedding breakfast. "Referring to leather," said the baroness amiably after some playful remark as to the spick and span polish of Dewey's sword belt—he was in dress uniform—"the most remarkable bit of Russian leather in the world is my face."

Dewey was always a quick thinker, but this stalled him.

"Madam," he said after a pause, "I am but a rough sailorman, and this is a heavy demand which you make upon me. I am not equal to the emergency."

"Of course," said the baroness, tapping him with her fan, "I should have to consider you hopelessly rude were you to agree with me. But you can preserve your neutrality—naval officers are taught to do that, are they not—by telling me what really fine eyes I have. They are fine, are they not?"

Thus assisted, Dewey rose to the occasion. The baroness' eyes were, in truth, magnificent.—Washington Post.

Peculiar to Boiler Makers.

"I noticed a peculiarity about a certain class of men not long ago," remarked a life insurance agent, "the cause of which I can't explain. My business not long ago carried me into one of the large boiler making shops in Memphis, and amid the din of the riveting I tried to talk to one of the men. I raised my voice to the loudest pitch possible, but he was unable to hear me. Finally he said, 'Speak low and I can hear you.' I found he was right. But the evening of the same day I saw the man at his home and found that there, where there was no noise, he could not hear me at all when I spoke in a moderate tone. I had to raise my voice to a very high pitch in order to be understood.

"This was not only the case with this man, but I noticed the peculiarity in all of the other boiler makers I had any dealings with."—Memphis Scimitar.

White Men In Alaska.

Not counting the floating population of miners and fishermen and lumbermen, which stays in Alaska only from spring till early fall, or the various tribes of Indians, which are estimated to aggregate between 40,000 and 50,000, the actual white residents probably do not exceed 10,000.

CHARACTER IN ONE'S VOICE.

It Is as Perceptible as the Words You Speak.

Unless the voice sounds cordiality words are powerless; unless the voice attests self confidence protestations do not convince; unless the voice speaks sincerity the apology is useless. It is necessary that we should control the voice to a reflection of that phase of mind and mood which we desire to present. When we would convince people of our efficiency, we must not permit a weak kneed voice to stagger under the words. When our heart goes out in warmth and affection, it cannot get far in a brass lined, iron bound voice. Conciliation is vain when the voice rings defiance.

Imagine yourself at a telephone when the instrument whirs and wheezes. The most impassioned appeal to John to come home to dinner and meet Cousin Mary is likely to prove ineffectual. A message to "that brute of a dressmaker man" who wants his money may be divided into the receiver with all dignity of tone and choice of word, but the wabbled reproduction at the other end does not go. You may use all your most dulcet tones and most expressive words when you are talking through the possessed wire to the business manager, but if the possessed wire is in a creaky fit the business manager does not get the right idea at all.

The truth is that most of us are always talking through a telephone. The honest will, the courteous intent, the high heart of courage, speaks clear and sweet and strong, but the muffled, wheezy, creaky, thin, unnatural, colorless result at our lips misrepresents us, and John doesn't, the dressmaker man insists, and the business manager gives the other fellow the job.

What can we do about it? The difficulty is almost always first a voice habit—a color the voice has taken on from some prevailing tint in our life. This is so with almost every one. This stain of the natural voice color is not voice individuality; it is a modifying of voice individuality, an obscuring of it. It is a habit, not a characteristic. It must be got rid of.

Only just what you want must go into your voice. Think of that a little. When you call to the child who stands on the edge of a fall, shall your panic go into your voice or just the reassuring note of gentle authority that you know will bring the child to you instead of startling it over the dreadful edge? When you interview the insubordinate cook, shall your sense that she very well deserves to be thrown out of your back door and her trunk on top of her prevail in your voice or your earnest desire to keep her in hand till after the impending dinner? When you face just the personality in your world who holds at the minute your fortunes in his gift, shall your sick sense that he does not know and may not believe in your fitness for what you are going to ask color your voice, or shall your firm belief that you can fill the place characterize it? That is the whole question. Shall your voice vibrate to such quality of your mood as you choose, or shall it be at the mercy of just what will do you injustice in the mind of those who hear? —Werner's Magazine.

Irishmen In the British Army.

There are at the present moment seven full regiments of Irishmen in the British army—the Enniskillen fusileers, the Connaught rangers, the Royal Dublin fusileers, the Royal Irish fusileers, the Royal Munster fusileers, the Royal Irish regiment and the Royal Irish rifles. And these Irish regiments are freer from any admixture of foreign or non-Irish blood than probably any other seven regiments in her majesty's army.

Not only are these Irish regiments composed of Irishmen, but the mixture of Irishmen in the English and Scottish regiments is very material. Of the 202,000 troops in the British army in 1898, 158,500 were of English, 26,370 of Irish and 16,480 of Scottish birth.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The street accidents of London amount to about 3,500 a year, nearly ten a day.

The population of India increases at the rate of 3,000,000 annually.

AN ELUSIVE BONANZA

THE STORY OF THE LOST LODE OF GORE RANGE.

How a Tenderfoot Accidentally Discovered This Wonderful Bank of Gold and Why He Didn't Enjoy the Richness Thereof.

They were telling mining stories in the courthouse, and Dee Reese, the lawyer, asked:

"Did you ever hear of the lost lode of the Gore range?"

The other lawyers sitting around him said they had never heard of it and then waited for him to begin. Mr. Reese borrowed a fresh chew of tobacco and told this story:

"Hundreds of experienced and inexperienced miners as well have spent a great deal of time and money looking for the lost lode of the Gore range, and they are searching for it yet. This famous mine was found and lost in the fall of 1896. A party of men from Iowa visited Routt county, Colo., in the fall of 1896 on a hunting and fishing trip. The party made its headquarters at Steamboat Springs. In the latter part of October the party moved up and went into camp on Rock creek, in the Gore range of mountains, which runs through northern Colorado. One of the party was a druggist, who had gone on the trip for his health. He knew nothing of mining. He had been warned by an old miner before he left Iowa not to be fooled, as many a tenderfoot had been, by what is known as 'fool's gold,' or iron pyrites. So this druggist paid no attention to the rocks, but attended strictly to his hunting and fishing.

"One afternoon while hunting for deer he started a fine buck and fired at him and wounded him. The buck fell, but got up and ran before the druggist could get to him. Where he fell was a pool of blood, which showed that he was badly wounded. The hunter trailed him by the blood spots on the dead leaves and grass for a mile and there found where the buck had lain down and then rising had gone on again. In this way the chase continued until sundown, and then the hunter, who was exhausted, sat down on an outcropping ledge of rocks to rest.

"In the enthusiasm of the chase he had not noted which way he traveled, and he realized that he was lost in the heavily timbered mountains, with night coming on. He knew it would be useless to try and find the camp that night, so he gathered a pile of dead limbs and kindled a fire against the ledge of rocks and laid down with his feet to the blaze and prepared to sleep. While lying there he noticed the rocks sparkled in the firelight. He got up and examined it, supposing it was the 'fool's gold' he had been warned against. But the rock looked so pretty that he broke off several pieces and put them in the pocket of his hunting coat, intending to carry them back to Iowa with him as curiosities.

"The next day he wandered all the forenoon, and then found the Gore pass road over the range and followed it to the camp. That very afternoon a regular mountain snowstorm began, and the party broke camp, returned to Steamboat Springs and from there went east.

"The druggist, whose name I have forgotten, staid in Denver for a few days on his way to his home in Iowa. In the lobby of a hotel in Denver the talk drifted to mining, and the druggist mentioned the specimens of stone he had found and was taking home. An old miner never misses a chance to examine a specimen and in this group in the hotel lobby was an old prospector. He asked to be shown the specimens. The druggist went to his room, fished up the old hunting coat from the bottom of his trunk and took out the piece of stone. The miner examined it closely and exclaimed:

"'Man, that's the richest specimen of gold bearing quartz I have ever seen!'

"The druggist thought at first that he was being joked with, but at last the old miner induced him to take the specimens to Burlingame, the best assayer in Denver. Burlingame assayed a piece of the quartz and reported that it yielded gold at the rate of $17,000 to the ton. The druggist was not satisfied. He submitted another piece of the quartz to another expert assayer and got a report that it yielded gold at the rate of $15,000 to the ton.

"The druggist returned at once to Steamboat Springs, but there was snow in the mountains. He went back to Iowa and returned to the Gore range the next spring and has spent every summer since then looking for the lost lode, and others have searched for it, too, but no trace of it has been found."—Kansas City Star.

Out of His Line.

"Jiggy," said the answers to correspondents man, who had occasion to refresh his memory, "when was it the Harvard-Yale debating contest came off? Do you remember?"

"You'll have to ask de sportin editor," responded the office boy. "He keeps track of dem college games."—Chicago Tribune.

THE COLONEL

A Story Showing How a Strict Disciplinarian May Possess a Tender Heart.

A squad of men had just arrived at the camp of the Fifth cavalry in the Indian country. The men were very raw, after the fashion of recruits all over the world. They had not yet been detailed to their place, and as they stood together, the object of no little interest and curiosity, they were looked upon as fair and legitimate game by the old veterans who gathered about them.

"Well, you chaps are in hard luck," said a young trooper, who had been looking them over for a moment.

"Why so?" asked one of the newcomers, glancing askance at the trooper.

"Didn't you know what your detail was?" rejoined the latter. "If you did, you wouldn't have picked this regiment."

"Well, what of it?" asked the new recruit.

"What of it? Didn't you hear that the old man is the greatest hustler in the line, that everybody's in the guardhouse half the time and that he strings a man up for having his hair parted wrong? Didn't you ever hear that?"

"Can't say I did," replied the recruit.

"Well," said the trooper as he turned and walked off, "I'm sorry for you; that's all."

Presently another trooper strolled by, looked commiseratingly at the newcomers, several of whom began to wish that they had applied for the infantry instead of the cavalry.

"I'm sorry for you, boys," he began. "You want to look out for yourselves. The old man's wound up this month, and he's bound to take it out on you recruits. What did you come to this regiment for anyway?"

"How was we to know?" replied one. "We came where they sent us."

Four or five troopers now joined their comrade, all of whom expressed their sympathy at the ill fortune of the new men.

"You should have seen the way he served the last recruits," said one. "Preferred charges against four fur gross stupidity, he called it, and sentenced wan fur imprisonment fur life in Death's valley, I believe."

Some of the new recruits began to think that surely they had made a mistake. They had believed that the life of a trooper was full of adventure and romance; they had never imagined there was any likelihood of falling under such a tyrant as their colonel was painted.

That night they talked the matter over in low tones. One was for deserting, but the nearest post was a long distance off, they did not know the way, and it was a bad Indian country. They finally determined to bide their time and escape at the first opportunity.

The following morning they were visited by other troopers, who professed to be anxious to hear about the east and what was going on in the great cities, but took occasion to express their astonishment that the men had joined a regiment whose colonel had such an antipathy for raw men.

There is a legend to the effect that a well man was once killed by being continually told that he looked ill, and so the new men fell into ranks with fear and trembling. They had not seen the much dreaded colonel, and when the line of march was taken up they were relieved to find that their position was at the end of the line of troops and that the "old man" was at the head.

It was a burning day on the plains. The heat could be seen rising from the parched earth in fantastic colorless waves. Away in the distance rose strangely colored buttes, resembling cities and battlements, as though inviting the wanderer to come nearer that he might be lost in the maze of wind and rain swept rocks.

Across this plain rode the troopers, forming a long, sinuous line, from which ascended a cloud of yellow dust that rose high in the air.

The great mess was absolutely level, and the line of march had been straight, but suddenly the colonel was seen to stoop over in his saddle and turn his horse out, making a slight detour. The men in the rear marveled what could break the line of march. Some thought it might be a rattlesnake and wondered that it was not shot.

Every trooper, as he passed the spot where the detour was made, looked curiously down to discover the cause, and each man saw a little bunch of grass and beneath it a bird on her nest, her soft brown eyes turned upward, watching, wondering and fearing. Five hundred horses had been turned aside, and 500 men, as they bent over the defenseless mother and her brood, received a lesson in that broad humanity which is the essence of higher life.

Finally the recruits reached the spot where the detour was made, and as they, too, passed and saw the object that had caused a whole battalion to turn aside they wondered.

According to the troopers, the colonel was a "terror," yet so soft hearted that he turned out the entire regiment rather than disturb a common bird sitting on her nest. There was something contradictory in this, and when the sergeant was not looking one of the recruits turned to his companion and said in a low tone, "Bill, I was just thinking."

"What?" replied Bill.

"Why, those fellows was sort of putting up a job on us yesterday about the 'old man.' He may be a terror on Injuns, but he's got the heart of a woman all right."

Bill agreed with him, and so, for that matter, did the 500 troopers who had been turned aside rather than harm or frighten the mother bird.—Animal Friends.

Definition of a Dachshund.

This is what the boy wrote about the dachshund:

"The dockshound is a dorg notwithstandin appeerencis. He has fore legs, two in front an two behind, an they ain't on speekin terms. I wunst made a dockshound out of a cowcumber an fore matchis, an it lookt as nacheral as life. Dockshounds is farely intelligent considerin thare shalp. Thare brains bein so far away frum thare tales, it bothers them sum to wag the lattur. I wunst noo a dockshound who wuz too impashunt to wate till he could signal the hole length of his boddy when he wanted to wag his tale, so he maid it up with his tale thet when he wanted it to wag he would shake his rite ear, an when the tale seen it shake it wood wag. But as fer me, gimme a bull pup with a peddygree."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Right and Left Eyed People.

People are right or left eyed just as they are right or left handed, and just as the right hand is usually the more powerful, so is the right eye. Only one person in ten is left sighted. It is very probable that the use of weapons during countless ages has had something to do with the extra power of the right eye.

Undaunted.

Sue Perstishus—Goodness, you would not start on a journey on Friday, would you?

Miss Schoffer—I'd start for Europe on 13 Fridays.—Philadelphia Record.

DECAYING MAORIS.

Sad Fate of a Noble Tribe of New Zealanders.

Civilization is responsible for the decadence and the probable extinction of one of the finest tribes that ever existed, the Maoris of New Zealand. Their history is one of continual bloodshed and fighting with the tribes of New Zealand and with the British. Looking at the Maoris of today, it is difficult to believe that they were once proud and haughty savages, who regarded with disdain the white sailors who occasionally visited them, mocking them as they walked, because they were not trained to the same athletic degree of fineness as the Maoris.

Artistic tattooing is still a feature of the Maori's personal decoration, says an Auckland correspondent of the Detroit News-Tribune. Some of the older men still retain their proficiency at the spear exercise, and the chiefs are not wanting in dignity and hauteur, but the Maori of today is not the Maori of 50 or even 30

TATTOOED MAORI CHIEF.

years ago. At that time the Maoris were ferocious athletes. Alcohol was unknown to them. Their staple foods were a kind of sweet potato, the bulbous root of a kind of lily and fish and birds. They did not use tobacco. As a result of this abstinence, they were blessed with fine white teeth, keen eyesight and perfect immunity from cancer and blood diseases. Cuts and wounds healed with remarkable rapidity. They were good fathers and mothers, attentive, indeed almost overindulgent to their children, though by an odd contrast they seldom hesitated to kill a weakly or deformed child at birth. The chief scourge of the Maoris was consumption, which was not brought upon them, however, by any careless or barbarous habit. The Maoris in New Zealand were a tropical race who migrated into a temperate zone. They naturally shrank from cold and suffered from coughs, rheumatism and influenza and from ailments of the throat and lungs.

At last the white man came, bringing with him the manifold curses of civilization. The musket turned the tribal wars into butcheries and swept away a fourth of the race in 20 years. Rum did some mischief, though not so much as among other savage races. More deleterious was incessant tobacco smoking. Various infectious diseases went through the tribe. European dress, worn in full one day and half laid aside the next, was another evil against a people already subject to consumption. When the British rule brought, after a succession of disastrous wars, lasting peace, even that had its disadvantages. It deprived the tribes of their main business and excitement and of the stimulus to keep in hard training. In the old fighting days the villages were placed on hilltops or at the edges of tall cliffs in the healthiest spots in the islands. They have since been too often shifted to low lying, ill drained levels by rivers, lagoons or marshes. Worst of all is the semi-idleness in which the Maori too often passes the year. He has grown fat, sluggish and unambitious—too intelligent not to see that his race needs rousing and reforming, but too lazy, torpid and dispirited to begin the work.

There are men still living who took part in the terrible war dance of the Maoris, now a thing of the past. All eyewitnesses unite in describing its effect as terrific. Hard headed pioneers and travelers, untroubled by nerves, admit the impression of horror left upon them by the sight. Painted with red ocher, stripped to the skin, the tattooed warriors roared, groaned, writhed and brandished their weapons. At one moment all leaped in the air, at another they stamped the earth till it shook beneath them. Their tongues were protruded, their faces worked convulsively, their eyeballs rolled till only the glaring white could be seen. Dripping with sweat, they seemed very demons in their frenzied contortions and excitement.

Deception In Art.

Ever since the days of Zeuxis and Apelles, when Bucephalus neighed at the sight of the painted Alexander and birds pecked at painted grapes, there have been occasional reversions to the horse bird theory of what constitutes art. It is not for effect on horses and birds, however, but for effect on the human consumer, that rabbits and squirrels are painted hanging on dingy old shutters with such realism that iron railings have to intervene to keep the victims of the deception from feeling the fur. Such pictures command good prices at the hands of gentlemen of sporting proclivities who desire to decorate their dining rooms.

It may be that they help to prove our Darwinian descent from cells of Archæan time by way of the ancestral birds with teeth and horses with five toes, but they irresistibly recall the new rich politician who built himself a fine house, with a library in it containing several thousand wooden book backs safely locked up behind glass doors to which the keys were always absent. It does not require high art merely to deceive.—New York Press.

A Burning Coal Mine.

The "burning mountain" of Montet, in Aveyron, France, which is often mistaken for an active volcano, because a pillar of cloud rises from it by day and a pillar of fire by night, is, in reality, a coal mine which has been burning for several years.

The Only Subject.

Teacher—How dare you laugh at me, you young rascals?

Chorus of Pupils—But we're not laughing at you, sir.

Teacher—Well, then, I don't know what else there is to laugh at.—London Tit-Bits.